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THE USES OF TEACHER POWER.

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THE USES OF TEACHER POWER IN INFLUENCING THE WORK CONDITIONS, REWARDS, AND ACTIVITIES OF TEACHERS ARE DISCUSSED. THE STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, AND APPROPRIATE USES OF VARIOUS TACTICS FOR THE EXERCISE OF THIS POWER ARE DESCRIBED. PARTICULAR ATTENTION IS GIVEN TO SANCTIONS, STRIKES, INJUNCTIONS, AND MASS RESIGNATIONS. PICKETING, SCHOOL BOARD ELECTIONS, SIT-INS, AND PACKING A BOARD MEETING ROOM ARE ALSO MENTIONED. APPENDIX TABLES CONTAIN INFORMATION ON WORK STOPPAGES AMONG TEACHERS (NUMBER OF STOPPAGES, NUMBER OF WORKERS INVOLVED, NUMBER OF IDLE MAN-DAYS) EACH YEAR DURING THE 1940-1965 PERIOD. THIS DOCUMENT (ITEM 184) IS ALSO AVAILABLE FROM THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS, 716 NORTH RUSH STREET, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60611, FOR $0.50. (HA)

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THE USES OF teacher power

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An examination of the tactics teachers use to improve the conditions under which they work, the rewards they receive, and the educational work they perform

NOV . 1966

THE USES OF teacher power

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March, 1966

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INTRODUCTION

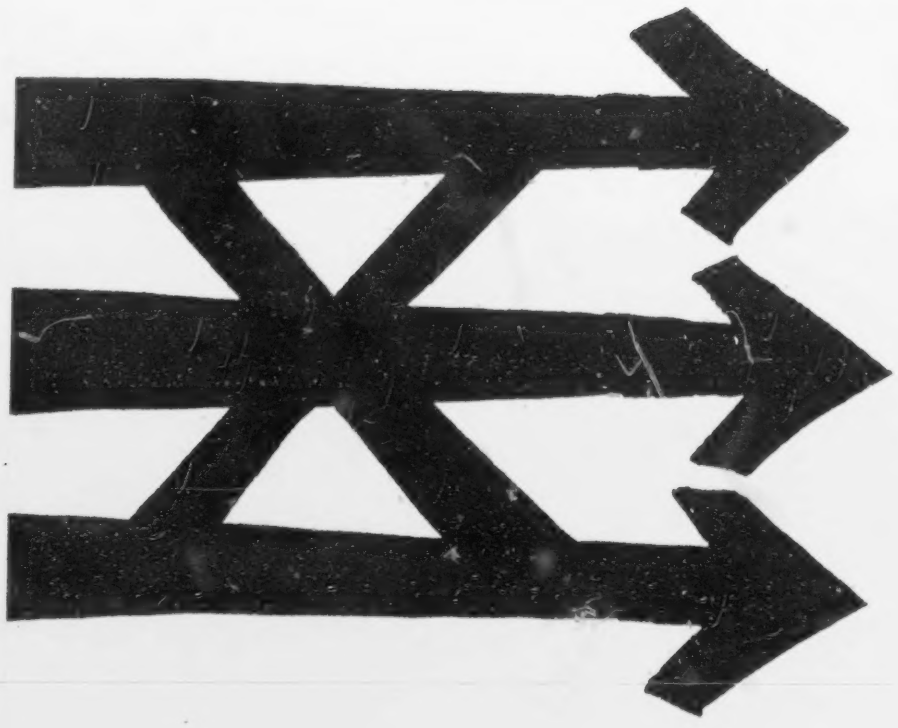
I have written this article

(a) to provide an analysis of the use of teacher power;

(b) to identify the various tactics of teacher power, emphasizing the importance of flexibility and randomness of action in choosing and using these tactics; and

(c) to discuss the particular tactics of sanctions, strikes, and mass resignations.

At the outset, it should be made clear that *this article is in no way an expression of AFT policy; it represents only the thoughts of one AFT researcher.*



TEACHER POWER

Teacher power is the potentiality which teachers have to collectively influence the conditions under which they work, the rewards they receive, and the educational work they perform. This potentiality is realized when, as a result of collective action by teachers, acceptable changes are made. Strikes, sanctions, mass resignations, sit-ins, political endorsements, public statements, and a host of other techniques are used to express this power and gain these changes.

For reasons of efficiency and order, the exercise of this power soon becomes institutionalized, taking such forms as collective bargaining relationships, continuing or formal participation in politics (i.e., school board screening committees, membership in lobbying blocs, etc.), and regular appointments to decision-making committees.

School officials see this first as a threat to their authority, a usurping of their power, but within a matter of years they often are praising collective bargaining or political action by teachers because participation brings consent.

Teachers are not only more active and articulate as a result of this process but more positive and proud. School boards who from time immemorial have made the decisions on school finances and policy now find that they have a better staff if the staff shares in these decisions.

Teachers participate most directly through collective bargaining. They must vote up or down the package offered by the school board, and if they turn it down, they are the ones who must take further action. Bargaining—in contrast to lobbying or serving on committees—brings the representative of the teachers back to the teachers for the big decisions. (This is not to imply that negotiators don't also need a little watching.)

Pure collective bargaining brings about a great change in employers. Its essence is not the give-and-take of the negotiating table, the ratifying votes, nor even the written contract, important as these items are, but the acceptance by the board of education, and by the teachers, that both sides are obligated to gain the other's consent before changes of mutual interest are enacted. This is hard for school board members to accept. The enlightened ones will discuss, to be sure, and they will consult, and some will even negotiate, but they fail to see any *obligation* on their part to win agreement with the staff.

In almost every case, teachers—after they themselves see the need—have to use their power—often an outright strike—to gain recognition of this mutual obligation. Just as the bitterest strikes in private industry occurred over this principle, most of the teacher strikes of today can be traced to the same source. In fact, because school board members are so truculent on this matter, or because new members of, and new majorities on, school boards must go through the same educational process, it sometimes takes two or three or even more demonstrations of teacher power, over a period of years, to hammer it home, as witness the multiple strikes in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, and East St. Louis, Illinois. There is always some new or unreconstructed school board member who thinks that the top half of the school structure can operate without the bottom half.

Yet, as shown by the history of private employment strikes, once this mutual recognition of each other's role is achieved, the number of strikes will diminish greatly. The strike then becomes the rarely called-upon but clearly remembered silent partner at the bargaining table. This is

because reason takes over when each side respects the other's power.

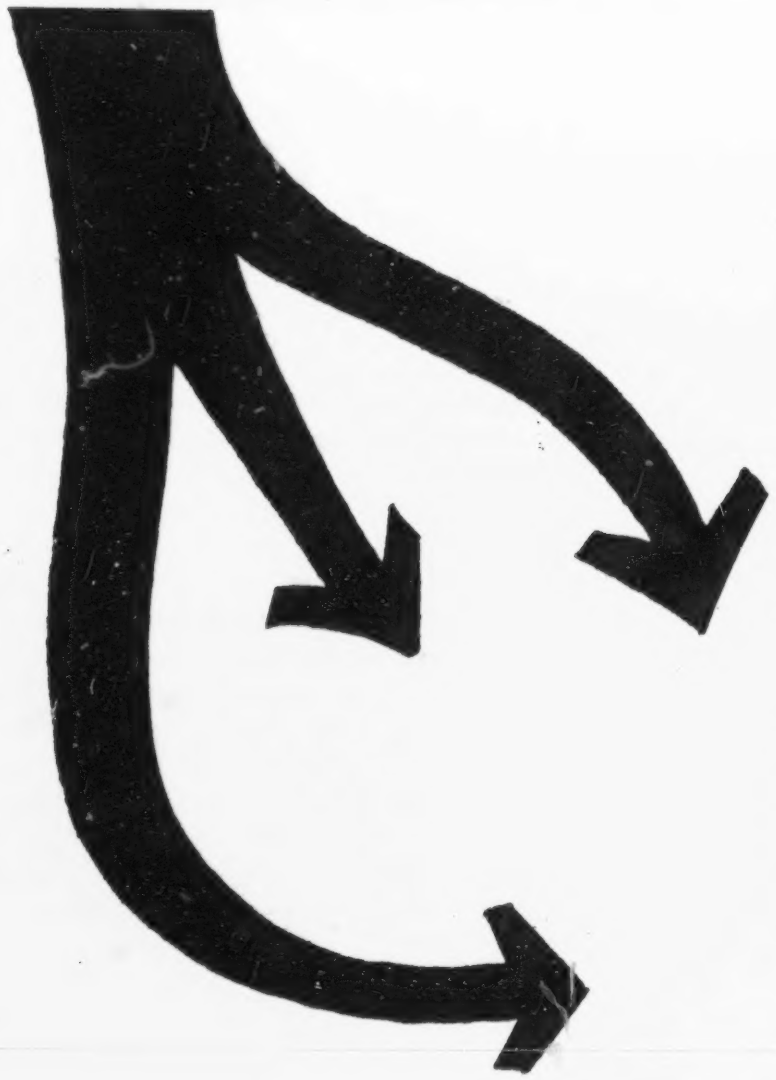
No part of this analysis is intended to give the impression that boards of education should turn the schools over to the teachers; that is not the objective of collective bargaining nor the message of this article. Rather, school boards, after they see the wisdom of it, are to use their authority to share their authority. They are not delegating their public responsibility. They are simply choosing the best way, the most positive way, of making decisions. The old way of unilateral rule is just not the best way of making decisions; it does not elicit the most knowledge or evoke the greatest participation. That boards decide to adopt bilateral negotiations is not abdication of, but responsibility to, the school enterprise. It results in the best education because all are a party to it.*

The responsibility of the school board, as with the responsibility of teachers, is not to seek to hold or gain as much power as possible, but to use and diffuse that power in the best interests of the participants in education. Quite obviously, the obligation to reach agreement on matters of mutual concern requires more sophistication and statesmanship than rule by decree. The same is true for teachers; it is easier to be ruled than to help rule.

So far this discussion has been on the theoretical side, but there is a practical side as well. Right now, teachers suffer from not having realized the potentiality of their power. Teachers want smaller classes so they can do a better job of teaching; they get bigger classes. Teachers want higher pay; they receive it or they don't receive it according to the affluence of the community, the virulence of the taxpayers' association, or the cunning of the school business manager. Teachers want a voice in curriculum development; they face increasing centralization in textbook development and selection. The philosophy of power aside, the need for power is great.

And teachers will have institutional power when they realize that in unity there is strength.

*Except for the students; they also need to make known their presence (or absence) in the meaning of the school.



TAXONOMY OF TACTICS

Given this potentiality and need, we must ask, what are the tactics teachers should choose and use to realize their strength? What tactics should be employed in a given situation, and when?

The first principle of power tactics is randomness of action. If the opposition believes that teacher action is inevitable, it will prepare its defenses—"seek to minimize its maximum possible losses"—rather than endeavor to reach an agreement. It is best to keep the other side guessing. Never reveal the settlement position. Balance hope of avoiding reprisals with fear of reprisals.*

The second principle is sureness of action. Never threaten that which cannot be carried out. If one side backs down because it cannot do what it says it is going to do, then its next threat will be given no credence. On the other hand, one strike at time of impasse may make a dozen future

*The quoted phrase and much of the reasoning in this paragraph and in the subsequent three paragraphs come from Professor Vernon Jensen of Cornell University.

strikes unnecessary. Ironically, the reason why so many agreements are reached without a strike is that the employees are sure to strike.

The first two principles bring us to the third. Combining randomness of action—whether you are going to settle or not—with sureness of action—if you don't settle, direct action will take place—a deadline can be set and tension will build. Martin Luther King calls this "creative tension;" people are forced to think *creatively*, perhaps for the first time, in order to remove themselves from a painful situation. If there is pressure on both sides, the best reasoning occurs at this point. That is why most major agreements are reached late at night, right before dawn brings the first strikers to the gate.

Collective bargaining has a built-in deadline. The contract has an expiration date. Thus, the union invokes sureness of action by insisting "no contract, no work."

The fourth principle is mass participation. Give each teacher a part in the process, a stake in the results. The more committees the better: when in a political campaign, set up a letter writing and canvassing committee in every precinct; when in a strike situation, a picket committee in every school. Hold mass meetings. Make up work if there are not enough jobs for the volunteers (but make the make-work meaningful or it will disillusion). Get people involved.

In this regard, one modern technique not generally recognized is that the public media can be used for private communication. The teacher-leader who, because of a strike or political crisis, is on television or in the newspapers, can shore up the morale of his members, and obtain their participation through identification, by speaking or acting in a manner and around ideas that will appeal directly to them. Charles Cogen is a past master at this. So was Mike Quill, but in his last strike he may have spoken so directly to, so defiantly for, his members that he undercut some of the public support needed to settle the strike early.

Other principles can be enunciated. Find out what moves the opposition. Is the school board member motivated by a political career, special interests, his name in the newspapers, a genuine desire to serve the public, or what? It makes a difference. There are some school boards that are sensitive to publicity; others that are not.

One way to budge an otherwise insensitive school board,

according to Saul Alinsky, the Chicago-based social actionist, is to "go outside its experience." Thus a sit-in—so unanticipated, so unique—may bring a school board to the negotiating table where a strike may bring a well-prepared defense. This use of the unexpected is at the basis of much of military history: consider the first deployment of the sling, longbow, tank, and submarine.

Alinsky also states that those social protestors who do achieve their objectives have usually prevailed through the mistakes of their opposition. Thus, the Selma to Montgomery march might never have occurred if Sheriff Jim Clark had not overreacted with tear gas and billy-clubs. The success of the Plainview, Long Island, strike of March, 1966, was also probably due to the unnecessary harshness of the school board and the state commissioner of education, who collaborated to call in strikebreakers and to threaten the strikers with loss of their teaching certificates. From such examples and from countless others, it is clear that public sympathy swings toward the unfairly persecuted.

Although certain statements, such as those above, can be made about tactics generally, it is also necessary to understand each tactic individually. In an effort to do this, and to present the information systematically, the chart on the next two pages has been prepared.

POWER TACTICS FOR TEACHERS

Tactic	Endorsed By[1]	Used By	What Makes It Effective	Why It Might Fail
Reason	AFT and NEA	AFT and NEA	Shows good faith	.....
Packing a Board Meeting Room	Both	Both	Alerts board members; reduces teacher temerity, emboldens to stronger action	Entrenched board may ignore it
Informational Picketing[2]	AFT	AFT and some local associations	Looks like a strike; also reduces teacher temerity	Same as above
Electing the School Board	Both	Both	Defeats enemies, elects friends	1) Too attenuated 2) Friends can become foes
Sanctions (Blacklist)	NEA	NEA	Publicity	Publicity might not move sophisticated employer
Strikes	AFT[3]	AFT and some local associations	"Teachers seldom strike, so something must be wrong"	Injunction
Sit-In	Neither	Occasional AFT local	Surprise value; also calls for greater sacrifice, so evokes greater sympathy	Injunction
Mass Resignations	Neither	Occasional local units of both	It can beat the injunction; fits nicely with "no contract, no work"	Fear by teachers before resignations are collected; panic after they are collected

[1]Either through formal resolution or, more importantly, through advice given to local units.

[2]Picketing can occur before a different school each morning, before board headquarters, at a school board meeting, at city hall, around the clock, at schools with class size over 35, at the homes of board members or city councilmen, etc.

[3]"AFT recognizes the right of locals to strike under certain circumstances. . . ." Resolution 79, AFT 1963 Convention.

Best Target	How It Can Be Abused
Everybody; early	.....
Superintendent who is misleading his board	.....
Sensitive suburban school system	.....
School board members worried about reelection	Can put union on both sides of the bargaining table; managing the schools then gets in the way of representing teachers
Rural towns, "bedroom" communities, and sparsely populated states	Too hard to notify everybody that it is over
Sophisticated or unreasonable employers	Strike fever
Negro or working class school district	Overuse
Injunction user	Overuse

In two different ways, the key to this chart is what has been omitted. First, those pressure tactics not yet invented, not yet tested sufficiently, and not yet known to this author are, of course, omitted. But they may be the most important. Innovation, variety, suspense, humor, and imagination are as needed in the choice and employment of teacher pressure tactics as they are in teaching school. They keep collective bargaining alive and stimulating, calling forth new patterns of participation, creating fresh tensions that cause the parties to the agreement to view with alacrity the fresh, new problems of teachers. For these reasons, no one should use this chart as a golden tablet from above.

Second, some tactics are omitted because, although they look effective on paper, they are not effective in practice. Some of these are:

Full page ads. In every town where a crisis is present and a sound philosophy of teacher power is absent, some teacher inevitably spills forth with the magic elixir: "Place a full page ad in the paper; we must take our message to

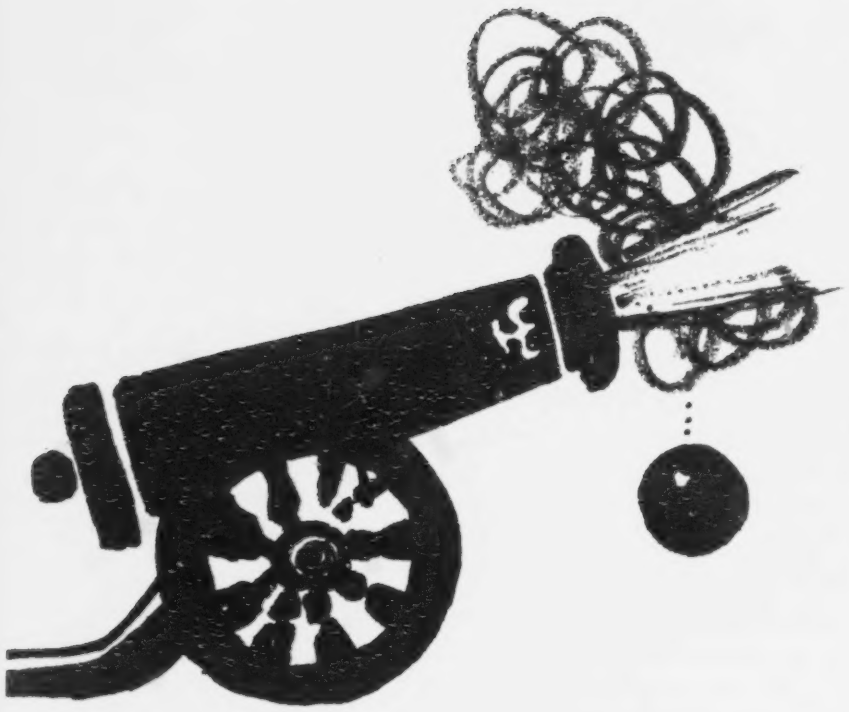
the public." He forgets that they can have their message on the front page of the paper if they are willing to march, and it won't cost them a penny. Furthermore, an advertisement is too nice, too easy, and too detached.

Withholding individual contracts or "intents" to return without a willingness or ability to strike. This is meant to harrass the administration; "it will foul up their records, they won't know who is going to return." But what happens when the administration notifies all, or certain teachers, that they have two days to sign or their jobs may be forfeited? They panic. For it is too difficult to police; unlike the strike situation, the weakest teachers have no picket line to cross; they are already in the school, subject to individual intimidation by the administration. The same weaknesses are inherent in giving the *power of attorney* to the teacher organization president (or lawyer) who is to hold all contracts and bargain for all teachers. The only justification for these tactics is as a prelude to a strike, because, if individual teachers are singled out for participating, all teachers must strike.

Extracurricular strikes or a compact not to substitute for a class during school hours. These techniques are also open invitations to the administration to find the weakest link. It won't be the militant coach who is asked why he isn't down in the gym, but it will be the meek home economics teacher who isn't with her after-school sewing group. The only justification for this tactic is when the goal is related; for instance, extra pay for extra work.

Sick leave strikes. This is a cowardly device. It alienates public support, separates teachers rather than collects them in one place, and deceives no one. Its only possible use is where a school board has obtained an injunction.

Altogether, teachers are developing a sophisticated satchel of sanctions. They are discarding the ineffective, refining the effective, and inventing the necessary.



SANCTIONS (*NEA BLACKLIST*)

The National Education Association (NEA) and its local and state affiliates define sanctions broadly, ranging from censuring their own members to collectively withdrawing services, but in practice they use them narrowly. As applied, the technique of sanctions is a blacklist. It is used to blacklist or boycott a school system, usually by notification to teachers outside the system that they should not accept employment within the system, but also, occasionally, by helping teachers within the system relocate outside the system.

An investigation by outside experts appointed by, and responsible to, the state or national association begins the process of applying sanctions. Such an investigation then becomes the basis for deciding whether the district will be

blacklisted. This decision is made, not by the local association, but by the state or national association.

The sanction is primarily an instrument of publicity. It takes a relatively long time to apply, and throughout the process (local request for sanctions, investigation team named, investigation team arrives and conducts investigation, formal report is issued, and sanctions are imposed), maximum local publicity is reaped. Ferman Phillips, executive secretary of the state education association in Oklahoma, where sanctions were imposed by the state and national in 1965, is quoted in *Look* magazine as saying that sanctions are "nothing but a bunch of publicity," and then is quoted as adding, "But it sure has attracted a lot of attention."* This is precisely the point.

Since publicity gives it whatever effectiveness it has, sanctions are best applied to those who want adverse publicity the least. Elected officials are therefore a prime target. Sanctions give a school system and a community a bad name; politicians seek, regardless of the facts, to give their school system and their community a good name.

As an illustration of this political sensitivity, the mayors and governors in several of the sanctioned cities and states feared aloud that the bad publicity would destroy their campaign to attract new industries to their area. Plant owners were said to be reluctant to relocate because their employees would not want to send their children to "poor" schools. Also illustrative was the political reaction in Oklahoma. When that state was sanctioned, political leaders and editorial writers recalled with bitterness the "Grapes of Wrath" stigma that the state had been trying to live down for twenty years. These men in public life made sanctions in Oklahoma much more effective than they would have been by being so alarmed by them, by screaming so hard that again they were being unfairly singled out.

Sanctions fit the legislative process best. It takes time for sanctions to go into effect; similarly, it takes time for a legislature to grind out a school revenue bill. Sanctions require investigations—a window dressing of facts; so does the legislative process, with its committees and hearings. Finally, as outlined above, sanctions scare the publicity-shy politicians; and if anything moves a legislature, it is

*Shawn Kalkstein, "Oklahoma's Education War," *Look*, January 25, 1966, p. 85.

politicians scurrying to remove themselves from the painful glare of publicity.

It therefore comes as no surprise that sanctions have been applied to, and have been most successful with, politicians and legislatures. Examples of this are the sanctions placed upon the governors (foremost) and the legislatures (to a lesser extent) of Utah and Oklahoma, the city council of Waterbury, Connecticut, and the federal government as proprietor of the overseas dependent schools. Also relevant is Little Lake, California, and Pleasantville, Iowa, where sanctions led not to immediate amelioration but to delayed changes through subsequent school board elections.

For the same reasons, sanctions fit the collective bargaining process awkwardly. Deadline bargaining is too compact, too immediate, for the drawn-out process of sanctions. In a crisis, local negotiators cannot wait for investigating teams, formal reports, and decisions by state and national leaders. And sanctions, since they are presumably based upon an impartial investigation, don't lend themselves to deadline threats. For instance, the threat of "an extra two hundred at maximum or risk being declared 'subminimal' " is ludicrous.

The school board accustomed to the use of real power is less impressed with the hoopla of sanctions. So is the machine-politics community. This is why the threatened sanctions in Newark, New Jersey, failed to impress either teachers or the school board, leading the association there into a strike for which it was psychologically and organizationally unprepared. Generally, the urban communities and the industrial states will be undaunted by sanctions. What does an announcement that the local schools have been labeled inferior by some educators' group, and that far-away teachers have been asked to stay away, mean to a city or state accustomed to demonstrations, strikes, riots, gang murders, and power blackouts?

Another problem with sanctions is that they don't work. (Or, at least, they have not so far.) They don't do what they say they are going to do. Not that they fail to arouse a lot of publicity and tempers, which is what makes them successful in certain areas and at certain times, but they fail to dissuade teachers from entering from the outside, or to relocate, or both. In Little Lake, California, the national publicity attendant upon sanctions there

brought in a record number of new teacher applications. In Oklahoma, by the OEA's own account, a scant 586 teachers were claimed to have left the state for teaching jobs elsewhere during the sanction summer of 1965.* This is probably not much higher than the normal exodus. Education is too unstructured, the licensing (and referral) of teachers too loose, and the teacher supply too elastic for sanctions to succeed.

The only way that this handicap can be even partially overcome at the present time is for teachers locally to assume the responsibility for its success. Thus sanctions will begin to be an effective boycott (1) if local teachers will penalize the outside teachers who have come to the district in defiance or ignorance of sanctions—in at least two places, namely Waterbury, Connecticut, and Tulsa, Oklahoma, teachers defying sanctions have been denied association membership—and (2) if they will make a serious effort to persuade all who can relocate to do so.

Such a need for local policing of sanctions is hampered in its turn by the removal of the decision-making responsibilities from the local unit. Sanctions are too centralized. Teachers don't decide whether sanctions will be applied; state or national officials do. You put in your request (and this can be done by 5 or 10% of the local teachers at a regular meeting), and you take your chances. The state or national leaders will or will not smile upon your bid for sanctions depending upon such things as their political connections in the area, how many "sanctions" in your area (or generally) have occurred recently, what the superintendent—who is also a member—has to say about it, or maybe just how many projects the staffer who opens your sanction-requesting letter has at that moment.

Sanctions are quickly taken away from rank and file teachers. They are not to be so entrusted with a device so "powerful." (The history of the NEA has a streak of distrust of teachers dating from the days the superintendents decided to use the NEA to "upgrade" teachers. But that is another story.) This centralized decision-making is inherent in the nature of sanctions, and perhaps this is one of the reasons why they were chosen as a tactic, but even given this, the actual conduct of sanctioning by the state and, especially, by the national has been unduly attenuated, formal, and secretive. The machinations of the NEA executive committee and executive secretary at the 1963 NEA convention in Detroit is particularly illustrative of

**NEA Reporter*, October 29, 1965, p. 3.

this. Despite the fact that almost everyone in the convention hall wanted them to apply sanctions in Utah, they, for reasons they never revealed, didn't, and then they applied pressure from the top down to make sure that they would not be reversed by the democratic process.* This centralization and bureaucratic caution is the reason why in at least two instances, Oklahoma and Utah, sanctions were not imposed until teachers had struck once and were threatening to strike again.

Despite these weaknesses, sanctions have been applied with at least temporary success. Publicity does move people to action. This technique does belong in a legitimate kit of tactical tools for teachers.

In this connection, any local or state teachers' organization competing with a rival which has called for sanctions should realize that if it attacks the process it will be creating more publicity, the ingredient most necessary to make it effective. Rather, the competitor should ignore it and start or accelerate its own action program. In short, the best way to outduel sanctions is to demonstrate or strike.

*"See John Scanlon's article, "Strikes, Sanctions, and the Schools," *Saturday Review*, October 19, 1963, pp. 51-53, 70-74.

STRIKES

The strike in public employment is primarily an instrument of social crisis. It is immediate. It affects people as much as, or more than, it affects politicians. It seeks to solve a problem by stopping everything connected with the problem.

The effectiveness of the strike in public employment usually stems directly from the pressure the public puts on politicians or public school officials. In the absence of this community pressure, a board official is subjected only to the qualms he has, if any, concerning the schools being closed, because, in the budget terms through which he usually views the schools, the strike is saving the schools money.

In the teacher strikes of today, and in the teacher strikes of 1946-1952 (which were also quite numerous), the community usually reacts to the crisis by asking of its representatives, "Teachers seldom strike, so what has got them so upset?" Ironically, the stereotype of teacher meekness developed in this country over the past several

centuries now contributes to the success of teacher militancy. Teacher strikes, especially where they have not occurred before, often succeed through shock.

It is true, of course, that some of this public shock is turned upon teachers in the form of public and personal condemnation, but if teachers remain united, and reinforce one another through rallies, the picket line, and telephone networks, then they will discover that condemnation is also being directed at school board officials; a fact which will bring board officials, more often than not, back to the bargaining table.

Teachers' strikes also inconvenience. Since schools are more custodial and less educational than even the most cynical social critic probably realizes, a strike has the effect of dumping children back on their parents for day-long and week-long care. As the strike progresses, more and more fathers are apt to call board headquarters and say, "I don't care who is at fault, get my kid his school back. His mother and I can't stand it another day."

In extended strikes, parental concern over missed opportunities for schooling also becomes a factor. Often, though, this becomes more of a fuss over the accessories of education than a concern for education itself. Thus, worry might focus on whether the graduation ceremony will be held, whether the child will do worse in college entrance tests than those children in schools not striking, or whether a football game will take place.

Inconvenience through having children at home and nervousness over missed school events, of course, do not cause as rapid a crisis as does shock or outrage. Yet, as the public becomes more accustomed to teachers striking, and thus becomes less outraged by it, inconvenience and educational nervousness will become the major enforcers needed to make both parties conscious of their obligation to reach agreement. Thus, we can expect teacher strikes to be of longer duration. Teacher strikes in the future will be less likely to last one to five days, as they do now, and more likely to stretch out to one to five weeks.*

*For an understanding of the extent and duration of past and present strikes, see the Appendix for a listing of work stoppages by teachers and by teacher organizations in the United States, 1940-1965.

Simultaneous with this lengthening of the duration of strikes, there will be an immediate increase in the number of strikes, since in almost every part of the country, the right of collective bargaining is being sought by teachers and fought by school boards. Once teachers win these battles, and the new accommodation sets in, the number of strikes will diminish greatly. As a result, in a matter of perhaps five to ten years, we can expect longer but much less frequent strikes by teachers.

As should be obvious by now, strikes fit the collective bargaining process perfectly. To gain the creative tension necessary to make deadline negotiations meaningful, you need an impending social crisis. Although it would be nice if they did, school board members do not grant big raises, reduce class size, or relinquish any of their unilateral prerogatives simply upon threat of a press release. And they don't usually keel over when informational demonstrations are planned, especially when they have already experienced them, or something more disruptive.

Strikes, and strike threats, are connected with collective bargaining through the concept of "no contract, no work." This is basic. It means that when one written collective bargaining contract expires, employees under its terms will not report for work unless a new contract has been negotiated. It builds into collective bargaining the tensions needed to make an expiration date a deadline. It is the equivalent of the board of education's statutory right to continue to rule in absence of a contract. In other words, if the board and the union cannot agree, then the board forces its conditions by unilateral fiat, and the union immediately forces a crisis by invoking a strike.

Since this process becomes automatic, either side can force a strike. This is especially important to remember when attempting to analyze why a strike occurs, and why it continues.

Once a collective bargaining relationship is established, each team of negotiators seeks to learn early during contract negotiations the other's settlement position. Management receives clues from union meetings. The union scrutinizes management financial data. The top negotiators for each side become friendly through frequent meetings (both at the bargaining table and through processing grievances), and, subconsciously or consciously, information is passed back and forth. Although there are exceptions, negotiators do not lack an estimation of what their counterparts will settle for.

It is the possession of such knowledge that gives each side the ability to call a strike.

But why? Given such good information on both sides, why would anyone want to refuse to settle? In some cases, it is because an advantage is seen, and a negotiator believes he can win more by striking. But more often it is not that logical. In reality, negotiations are not one rational person sitting across from another rational person at the bargaining table; rather, it is one complex organization sitting across from another complex organization.

Thus, to understand the much fewer but often longer strikes that occur after the relationship becomes stable, you must analyze the politics as well as the personalities of both parties in the dispute. On either side, someone may feel he is being threatened by others deep in his own organization, that he must take a militant stand at the bargaining table to overcome such backbiting; another may have bragged too much about "how much he was going to get out of the company" or how he would be the one to "get the union to back down;" a third may find himself unable to convince powerful persons or caucuses in his organization that the other side will strike if the offer is not upped or reduced substantially. Power shifts can occur within both organizations that will render a stable relationship fluid. There are "hard liners" in both organizations at any given time; if they are in the ascendancy, top negotiators may be helpless.

All of this often escapes editorial writers and politicians, both of whom flit from crisis to crisis, often without an understanding of the deeper and amazingly subtle and complex ramifications of having persons react to each other through formal organizations. But make no mistake about it, the strike often means that one side or the other, or both sides, has power blocs or dominant personalities who do not want to settle.

Such a view of the strike reduces the statement that "strikes in government employment are strikes against the people" to an absurdity. The union strikes against representatives of the public and not the public itself. Furthermore, representatives of the public are just as capable of forcing a strike as union representatives. In the field of education, the factions on a school board, the interdepartmental rivalries at school administration headquarters, or the jealousies between power-seeking or power-holding officials can precipitate a strike as fast as any of the dynamics of a teacher union. It is clear that the public can be abused, ignored, or forgotten by its executives.

And this can be done over a long period of time, or even indefinitely, for the public is not only apathetic and uninformed, but amorphous and divided by its many

private interests. Tell a homeowner that a strike in the schools is in the offing and he may think of his tax rate; tell a mother and she may worry about her child's grades; tell a party-goer and he may yawn; and tell a little old lady in high-button shoes and she may ask who let John L. Lewis out of the mines. The public does not know the facts, and it employs representatives (1) to keep from knowing the facts and (2) to confuse the issue for anyone who does want to know the facts.

Even if the public desired and was given information about why each side refused to settle, there is nothing to guarantee its impartiality. The public is too involved to arbitrate. As Myron Lieberman writes, "The citizenry is not a disinterested third party. Righteous indignation on the employer's part because the employees find their working conditions intolerable can be just as hypocritical in public employment as it often is in private employment."*

*Myron Lieberman, "Teacher Strikes: An Analysis of the Issues," *Harvard Educational Review*, Winter, 1956. p. 52. (This is the best piece ever written on teacher strikes; the only thing that approaches it is the unpublished doctoral dissertation by Albert Schiff entitled "A Study and Evaluation of Teachers' Strikes in the United States" which was completed at Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan, in 1952.)

The public is not supreme. Individuals employed by the public have their rights. The same analysis that correctly describes the emasculation of unions in Russia under the guise that all employees work for the state and thus for the people must be applied in this country wherever governing bodies assert the right to keep unions weak or to crush strikes in the name of the public.

(But an aroused public does have a part to play. Public sympathy has tipped the balance of power in many strikes. This is one of the reasons that both sides of the public employment equation must have the right to force a crisis, a crisis that will enlist the pained concentration of the previously apathetic public in the seeking of a creative solution.)

Just as it is tyrannical to place the public, or its representatives, as the final power in the schools, it is equally dangerous to ascribe the same role to children. Those who state that "Schools exist for children" or "The children must come first" are simple-headed. There are many participants in the school enterprise—children, teachers, administrators, non-certified employees, school board officials—but none should be so paramount that others are denied their dignity.

INJUNCTIONS AND MASS RESIGNATIONS

Even though this logic of school strikes is beginning to be better understood, the statutory law in a number of states and the common law in most other states still prohibit striking by public employees. Ironically, it is this legal weight against striking school systems that make such strikes so necessary and so effective. Without the right to strike, or the concomitant right to bargain collectively, which at this date has only been established in a handful of states, the opportunity to ignore or abuse the rights of teachers is still very present, and thus teachers have more reason to strike. When they do so, their action is even more startling, and often even more effective, because it is in disobedience of civic or common law.

Yet while the shock of school strikes will wear off, the law on school strikes changes slowly, if at all. A public which will tolerate or even sympathize with strikes when they occur will also not insist that teachers have the legal right to strike; in this vacuum, the board of education retains, in too many cases, the right to enjoin, and thus the ability to stymie meaningful negotiations.

As a result, teachers who strike have to consider such tactics as (1) having their officers accept the injunction in order to call off the strike from the standpoint of the union, but continue to remain out as a matter of personal conviction; (2) preparing to see their leaders or themselves jailed (an overreaction that invariably adds sympathy to the union cause); and (3) building in advance a large strike fund to pay for the great amount of salary loss they will suffer in a strike made longer by an injunction and, also, to pay for possible fines imposed as a result of defying the injunction.

The whole injunction process is complex, and while potentially dangerous, it is not automatic. Nimble defensive action and good legal maneuvering can often postpone or avoid any dire consequences. The injunction is an anti-labor device and where organized labor is strong, use of the injunction can often be inhibited or prevented.

An injunction has never solved a social crisis. It is in no way a substitute for negotiations. The public will ultimately see that it gives its representatives the right to coerce; in effect, it gives them a double power, first to force a strike

by ignoring every demand of the employees and then the power to break a strike by threat of fine or jail sentence.

The check on possible abuse of teacher power should not be so easily obtained and should never be in the hands of the adversary. Any such check rests better with an informed public, its skilled mediators, and a much more sophisticated law.

One alternative to the strike which does not always become involved in this coercive imbalance of powers and which presents the relation of the public employee to the public and to public officials in a fresh and effective way is mass resignations. At the time of crisis, teachers submit their resignations from the school system in writing to their representatives. This is a pledge that if conditions are not improved through negotiations they will leave the system.

These pledges are then used by the representatives to build toward a negotiating deadline. If the parties settle, then the resignations are torn up. If not, the employees walk off the job and picket as in a strike, but with the difference that the signs notify the public that the teachers are resigning over low pay, bad conditions, unfair treatment, or whatever. Then if the public wants to prevent such a complete turnover of employees, it presses the school board to rehire them through negotiating more satisfactory conditions.

This type of public notification has already occurred twice in this country—among the evening school teachers in New York City during 1959 and with the summer playground instructors in the same city during 1964—and is used by teachers with a good deal of success in Canada.

It requires the highest degree of trust between the teacher and his elected representative. The decision to continue or resign is not something to be entrusted to a relative stranger. A teacher is more apt to turn over his resignation to a fellow teacher whom he has actively supported, while teachers generally are more apt to adopt this technique in a highly democratic organization. If teachers think their organization is downtown at staff headquarters or amongst a small clique of officers, then this "we-they" separation will prevent the employment of this method. On the other hand, if teachers believe that they are the union, and that they elect leaders to guide and not to rule, then they will trust their representatives with their resignations.

CONCLUSION: "And let the air out of the volleyballs."

At a recent seminar on teacher power, a pretty woman teacher dressed attractively in a green cocktail dress was finishing her account of a sit-in which had occurred over the right of teachers to help negotiate their terms and conditions of employment. "And let the air out of the volleyballs," she said. "Close the place up tight. Don't let the administration come in the next day, herd all the children into the gym, and report to the public that school is going on as usual."

These phrases caught the persons in the audience by surprise; most of them believed that teachers had the right to strike, but couldn't it be a more genteel process, one that didn't have to involve hard tactics by both sides.

But she was right. Employers are not going to give up their unilateral powers without a fight. The injunction will be used. Classes will be without teachers and children will run loose in the halls, but the school will be declared open. And in more and more cases, strikebreakers will be imported.

Such reaction must be met by the teachers with sureness of action. Teachers must not act militantly out of courage, only to act apologetically out of embarrassment; more than one strike has been lost because teachers were willing to walk out of their classes but were not willing to picket in front of their schools.

A strike is not a "recess," a "professional holiday," an "extended meeting," or a "withdrawal of services;" it is a "strike." You may call it something else to fool a judge, but not to fool yourself. Militancy, collective bargaining, and self-responsibility are, after all, primarily a state of mind. You have power only after you believe you have a right to power.

This is the basis of an active life, the essence of professionalism, and the key to self-emancipation by teachers. Being no better and no worse than the other participants in the school enterprise, and respecting but not capitulating to them, teachers need to embrace power for the good that it can bring, and for the goods it can bring them.

APPENDIX

Table 1. Work Stoppages Involving Teachers in Public Schools and Other Schools, 1940—65

YEAR	ALL SCHOOLS			PUBLIC SCHOOLS			OTHER SCHOOLS		
	Stoppages beginning in year		Man-days idle during year	Stoppages beginning in year		Man-days idle during year	Stoppages beginning in year		Man-days idle during year
	Number	Workers involved[1]		Number	Workers involved[1]		Number	Workers involved[1]	
1940	2	100	900	2	100	900	—	—	—
1941	1	120	120	1	120	120	—	—	—
1942	2	170	2,090	2	170	2,090	—	—	—
1943	2	100	330	2	100	330	—	—	—
1944	4	1,710	7,960	4	1,710	7,960	—	—	—
1945	1	20	160	—	—	—	1	20	160
1946	16	3,060	37,100	14	3,030	36,400	2	30	730
1947	20	4,720	21,100	20	4,720	21,100	—	—	—
1948	12	4,210	60,300	10	4,140	59,800	2	80	490
1949	9	440	920	5	350	490	4	90	430
1950	4	90	860	—	—	—	4	90	860
1951	10	4,510	67,000	6	4,310	65,200	4	200	1,830
1952	7	1,570	7,540	7	1,570	7,540	—	—	—
1953	1	170	510	1	170	510	—	—	—
1954	2	600	1,910	2	600	1,910	—	—	—
1955	1	220	14,900	1	220	14,900	—	—	—
1956	5	640	1,500	5	640	1,500	—	—	—
1957	2	870	4,730	2	870	4,730	—	—	—
1958	1	50	110	—	—	—	1	50	110
1959	2	210	670	2	210	670	—	—	—
1960	3	5,490	5,490	3	5,490	5,490	—	—	—
1961	1	20	20	1	20	20	—	—	—
1962	2	20,000	20,100	1	20,000	20,000	1	20	120
1963	3	2,210	2,630	2	2,200	2,590	1	10	40
1964	9	14,400	30,600	9	14,400	30,600	—	—	—
1965	6	1,860	8,640	5	1,800	8,400	1	60	240

[1] "Workers involved" includes all workers made idle for 1 day or longer in school systems directly involved in a stoppage. These figures represent the number idle on the day of peak or maximum idleness. In those instances in which idleness fluctuates during the strikes the actual number of workers idle on varying dates is used in computing the man-days of idleness.

NOTE: Because of rounding, sums of individual items may not equal totals.

SOURCE: U. S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, March 1966; 1965 added by the author.

APPENDIX

Table 2. Work Stoppages Involving Teachers, by Affiliation of Union or Professional Association,[1] 1940—65

YEAR	AFL			CIO			AFL-CIO		
	Number	Workers involved[1]	Man-days idle	Number	Workers involved[1]	Man-days idle	Number	Workers involved[1]	Man-days idle
1940	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1941	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1942	1	20	590	—	—	—	—	—	—
1943	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1944	3	1,6[illegible]	7,740	—	—	—	—	—	—
1945	—	—	—	1	20	160	—	—	—
1946[2]	4	1,950	29,200	3	120	2,080	—	—	—
1947	6	1,230	5,500	1	20	200	—	—	—
1948[2]	4	3,550	58,200	4	610	1,840	—	—	—
1949	1	30	30	4	90	430	—	—	—
1950	—	—	—	1	10	110	—	—	—
1951[2]	4	4,160	63,900	—	—	—	—	—	—
1952	3	1,490	7,120	—	—	—	—	—	—
1953	1	170	510	—	—	—	—	—	—
1954	2	360	1,210	—	—	—	—	—	—
1955	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1956	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	370	370
1957	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	500	4,000
1958	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1959[2]	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	210	670
1960	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	5,490	5,490
1961	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1962	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	20,000	20,000
1963	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	2,200	2,590
1964[2]	—	—	—	—	—	—	6	2,220	8,200
1965	—	—	—	—	—	—	6	1,860	8,640

See footnotes at end of table.

APPENDIX

Table 2. Work Stoppages Involving Teachers, by Affiliation of Union or Professional Association,[1] 1940—65—Continued

YEAR	INDEPENDENT (unaffiliated)			PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION			NO UNION OR PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION		
	Number	Workers involved[1]	Man-days idle	Number	Workers involved[1]	Man-days idle	Number	Workers involved[1]	Man-days idle
1940	—	—	—	2	100	900	—	—	—
1941	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	120	120
1942	—	—	—	1	150	1,500	—	—	—
1943	1	50	140	—	—	—	1	50	190
1944	—	—	—	1	50	210	—	—	—
1945	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1946	—	—	—	7	810	4,680	3	180	1,130
1947	—	—	—	8	3,390	15,200	5	80	200
1948	—	—	—	—	—	—	5	60	180
1949	—	—	—	1	120	240	3	190	220
1950	3	80	760	—	—	—	—	—	—
1951	3	190	1,810	2	130	1,330	2	30	30
1952	—	—	—	—	—	—	4	90	420
1953	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1954	1	240	700	—	—	—	—	—	—
1955	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	220	14,900
1956	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	270	1,130
1957	1	370	730	—	—	—	—	—	—
1958	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	50	110
1959	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1960	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1961	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	20	20
1962	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	20	120
1963	1	10	40	—	—	—	—	—	—
1964[3]	—	—	—	4	12,100	22,300	1	30	150
1965	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

[1]The unions and professional associations listed are those directly or actively involved in the dispute. The number of workers involved may include members of other unions or professional organizations, or unorganized workers idled by the dispute action.

[2]The count of strikes by affiliation exceeds the total number of strikes (Table 1) because 1 strike in the year involved two organizations. In these instances, the number of workers involved and man-days idle were divided equally between the organizations involved because available data did not permit a precise division.

[3]The count of strikes by affiliation exceeds the total number of strikes (Table 1) because 2 strikes in the year involved two organizations each. In these instances, the number of workers involved and man-days idle were allocated among the organizations on the basis of information contained in press reports.

SOURCE: U. S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, March 1966; 1965 added by the author.

AFT RESEARCH REPORTS, 1965-1966

Survey of Teachers' Salaries, September, 1965. A comprehensive survey of teachers' salaries in 700 school systems with enrollment of 6,000 students or more. (Publication No. 84, $1.50 for non-members, 35 cents for members.)

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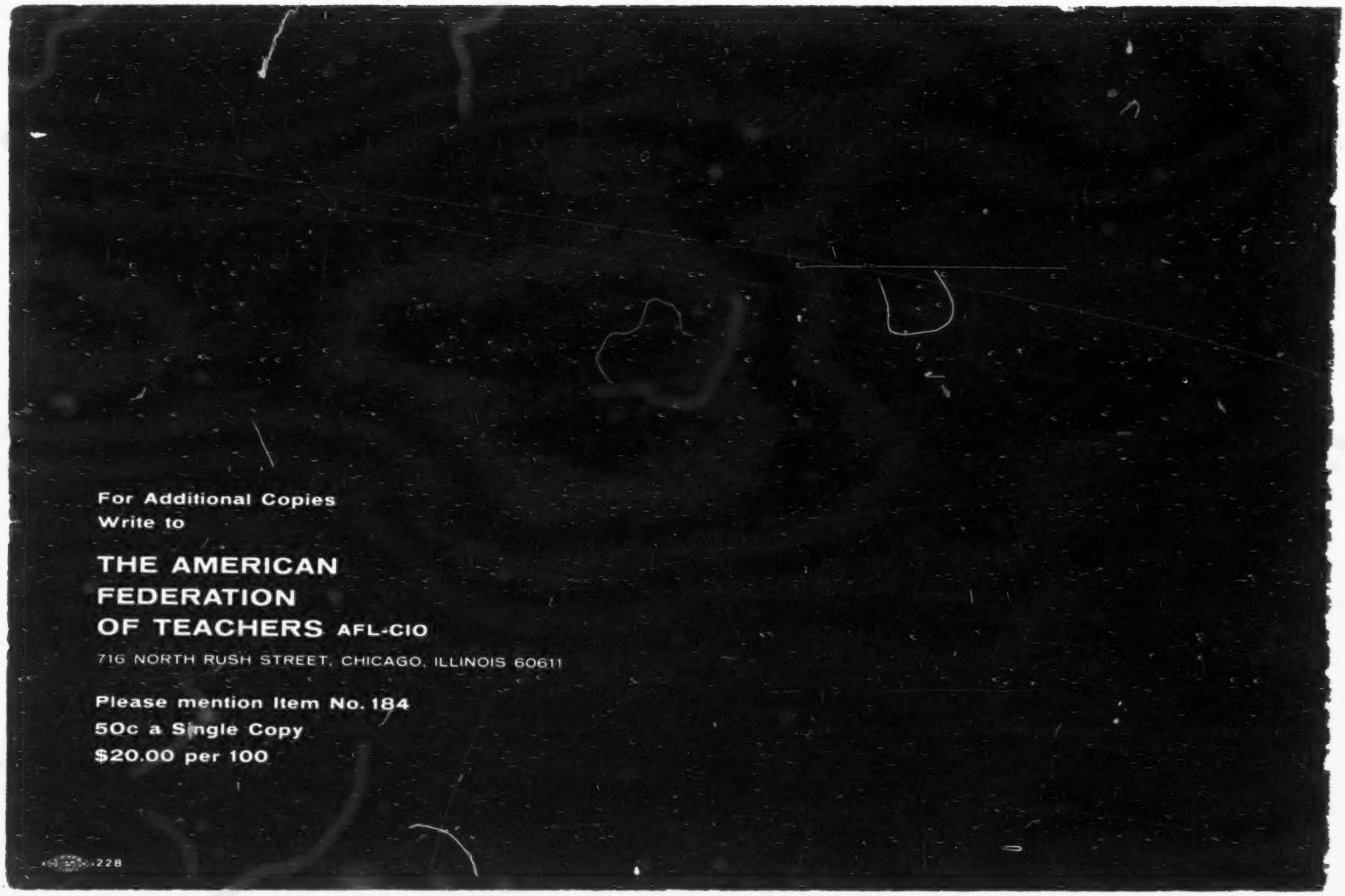

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